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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

1-11-2018

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Graduate Associate Deans Meeting

Minutes – January 11, 2018

Pending Approval

Members Attending: **Dixie Thompson** (Vice-Provost & Dean); **Jeffrey Fairbrother** (Education, Health, & Human Sciences); **Bruce Behn** (Haslam College of Business); **Charles Noble** (Haslam College of Business); **Todd Moore** (Arts & Sciences), **Alex Long** (Law); Masood Parang (Tickle College of Engineering); **John Stier** (CASNR); **Michael Palenchar** (Communication & Information); **Becky Jackson** (for Sherry Cummings, Social Work); **Avigail Sachs** (for Katherine Ambroziak, Architecture & Design); **Michael Palenchar**, Communication & Information; **Holly Mercer** (Libraries)

Ex Officio: **Yvonne Kilpatrick** (Graduate School), **Sara Bradberry** (Graduate School), Mary Albrecht (Graduate School)

Welcome & Call to Order by Dixie Thompson @ 2 p.m. in SSB 405.

1. **Approval of Minutes** (November 2017) - Approved
2. **Welcome Sara Bradberry**, our new Assistant Dean & Director of Student Services in the Graduate School. As we move to automated degree audits, she will be charged with getting us up and running. We are excited to have her as part of our team!
3. **Introductions** – Everyone introduced themselves.
4. **Graduate School Updates (Dixie)**
 - Academic Standings – Notifications went out just prior to our winter break. We are seeing a few appeals. Each time we are doing the academic standings, the process is getting better, and overall responses are much better.
 - Graduate Blueprint Team – Met recently and previewed the admission and enrollment modules again and did an initial preview of the support module. This module will pull in information on how our students are supported (assistantships, fellowships, stipends, tuition support, etc.). This will provide an opportunity to see this information so much differently than we have in the past. We are hopeful for a spring roll out of this module.
 - Recruitment Money – There is money available. Please let department heads know that this is still an opportunity if they would like to apply.
 - Graduate Student Employment – As part of our Graduate Catalog review, we are looking at graduate student employment. Mary Albrecht has done a first pass by removing outdated information, but now we are working on a deeper review.

- Offer Letter Template - Dixie has asked Ann Robinson-Craig and Kim McCulloch to help develop a standard template for offer letters that can be used across campus.
- Research Assistant Handbook – years ago, we used to have one. This would really be helpful to revive and bring back. Something to consider.
- Expectations of Student Employees –Some departments allow student employees to leave when the term ends, others require them to continue working between terms and during breaks. Does a guideline need to be clarified in the catalog? Discussion followed about the needs of some departments to have students work when campus is closed and the variety of needs across campus, as well as concerns from the student perspective.

The Graduate School will continue to work on this and discuss again in the future.

- 3MT – Refer to email (revised version that went out today)

We sent out information recently that included old information regarding potential award amounts. Please disregard and refer to the new email that was distributed today. There will be payments made for those student who make it to the finals; however, the amounts have not been determined yet. Also, there will not be an expectation of colleges to contribute to those awards. The Graduate School will cover them.

- January 17 is the due date for names
 - For each of the semi-finals, send Sean Hendricks the date, time, and place as soon as possible.
 - Semi-finals will take place mid-February through early March.
 - Jeff asked that we add planning for 2019 to the agenda of our meeting at the end of this term so that we can get an earlier start. We will add it to the
- Credentialing (Handout) - The purpose of this handout is to share the language that will be going before Graduate Council for a vote. The desire of the campus is to return the oversight of credentialing to the units and do away with the Credentials Committee. Specific guidelines begin on page 2. The proposed language for who can be on a doctoral committee is stronger than what we have now. Discussion followed.

There is a sentence that refers to the fact that the Dean of the Graduate School can grant “one-time” approval. Suggestion that “one-time” needed to be removed. Dixie will work to clean up this language.

Clarification: The term “External faculty” is not external to the university; only to the department.

This document will be on the agenda at the next Graduate Council meeting. Please share with your department heads; especially those who have joint faculty and make sure the revised policy meets their needs.

- Graduate Admissions Update (Yvonne)
 - We currently have 20 visitors from Argentina for about 7 weeks. They are attending classes in CASNR, Engineering, Arts & Sciences, etc. We are happy to share the courses they are taking; also they have some open times if any departments are interested in hosting an event for them. Contact Jim Hamrick. They will have an open house on January 16 from 4 – 5:30.
 - We are approaching the February 1 International Deadline. Yvonne shared statistics regarding the number of applications received to date. She will continue to keep colleges informed and get numbers to you asap.
- TN Fellowships – We are receiving applications for our Tennessee Fellowships for Graduate Excellence. More details to come. You may also contact Sean Hendricks in our office with any questions, and information is also available on our website. Discussion followed.
 - Departments have some flexibility in terms of where the money to cover stipends will come from.
 - Communication is key to success--let students know the expectations up front. Expectations are high, but we are seeing much more productivity. It is more work; but that also means more positive outcomes.
 - Dixie asked that the colleges share success stories about our TFGE students. Let us know what is happening!
 - The 17th is the deadline for nominations for the TN Fellows. Reminder: students nominated but not selected are automatically considered for our endowed awards.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Next meeting: February 8 @ 2 p.m.

Recommendations for Credentialing and Dissertation Committees

10 January 2018

Background

Following extensive discussions in the Credentials Committee and increasing calls from Department and College constituencies, the Graduate School was tasked at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year with reforming the credentialing process for the authority to direct dissertations. In response, Dean Dixie Thompson convened a special summer Credentials Working Group to make recommendations for potential reforms. The Credentials Working Group was chaired by Associate Dean Ernest Brothers, and included committee members Amy Broemmell (CEHHS), Todd Moore (CAS), Charles Noble (HCB), John Stier (CASNR), and Mehmet Aydeniz (CEHHS).

In September 2017, the Summer Credentials Working Group finalized their recommendations. Following a joint meeting of the Academic Policy Committee and the Credentials Committee, Dean Thompson appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee on Credentialing and Dissertation Committees to work through the recommendations of the Summer Working Group, and propose concrete policy changes on the credentialing process and graduate school policies on the establishment of PhD Dissertation committees. The Ad-Hoc Committee, with members drawn from both the APC and the Credentials Committee, met in early November to draft new language governing Dissertation committees. Guided by the original charge to reform the process from Spring 2017 and the work of the Summer Working Group, the committee sought to write policy based on the following principles:

1. All tenured and tenure-track faculty at the rank Assistant Professor or above be automatically credentialed to direct dissertations;
2. Joint faculty at the rank Joint Assistant Professor or above in interdisciplinary/intercollegiate PhD programs be automatically credentialed to direct dissertations;
3. Permission for non-tenure track faculty either from inside or outside of UT be handled first in the graduate program unit, and submitted to the graduate school by the Department or Program head.

As with any policy, small changes can have cascading affects. The most difficult question in this process has been how to deal with Bredesen Center joint faculty, and other edge cases in the variety of programs at the University. For precedent on including ORNL Joint Faculty, the committee looked to the University of New Mexico, which has a similar relationship with two national laboratories.

The committee tasked with evaluating the current Ph.D. credentialing process believes strongly that the most informed decisions regarding an individual's ability to meet the needs of doctoral students pursuing a Ph.D. are made at the doctoral program granting level. With that in mind, we are advocating a system in which the Department Head/Intercollegiate Program Director is charged with making the determination of who can chair and serve on Ph.D. committees within the parameters established at the University level. We also believe that both tenured faculty and those faculty hired into tenure-track positions are inherently presumed to have the capabilities to serve as Ph.D. committee chairs. We recognize that those in other roles, both inside and outside of the University of Tennessee, may possess the qualities necessary to serve, and believe that the

Department Head/Intercollegiate Program Director would be the individual most knowledgeable about making judgments related to those qualifications. As such, we are proposing a new system in which there is no university-wide credentialing committee. Rather, the primary responsibility for approving Ph.D. committees lies at the department/intercollegiate program level, although the Dean of the Graduate School still retains the responsibility of making certain that such committee appointments fall under the broad parameters outlined below.

On January 10, 2018, the Academic Policy Committee and Credentials Committee held a joint meeting to review and discuss the proposed policy. The committees unanimously approved the policy.

Guidelines for Ph.D. Committee Service

Ph.D. committees at the University of Tennessee must be composed of at least four people. At least two committee members must be tenured or tenure track UT faculty. The chair of the committee is typically from the student's department/intercollegiate program. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department; in interdisciplinary programs, one member shall be from outside that program. Committee members outside the student's home department/program are referred to below as external members. External members may be from outside of the University of Tennessee, but must be approved in accordance with the procedures below.

The Dean of the Graduate school must approve every PhD student committee; however, the primary responsibility for approving individuals to serve on those committees is held at the department/interdisciplinary unit level. As a rule, the faculty member's graduate unit/department submits the Doctoral Committee form with any necessary attachments to the Graduate School immediately upon formation of the dissertation committee.

Those who may chair and/or serve on committees likely fall under one of the following categories. However, the Dean of the Graduate School may grant one-time approval outside the parameters of these categories, in specific cases as supported by the department and deemed in the best interest of the student.

Category One: University of Tennessee tenured or tenure-track faculty holding a doctoral degree or ORNL Joint Faculty holding a doctoral degree are automatically granted the approval to chair or be a member of any doctoral committee.

Category Two: Individuals who are not tenured/tenure track whose primary employer is the University of Tennessee and who hold the titles of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor can co-chair or be a member of dissertation committees. However, they may only co-chair committees if their appointment is within the student's major.

Category Three: Tenured or tenure-track faculty at other institutions may serve as the external member on a dissertation committee. The individual's CV must be attached to the Ph.D. committee form when it is submitted to the Graduate School.

Category Four: Others who are considered experts in the field may serve as an external member of the dissertation committee. The individual's CV must be attached to the Ph.D. committee form when it is submitted to the Graduate School.

Category Five: Emeritus faculty may continue to chair, or serve as a member of, existing committees. They may not be appointed to any new committees once retired, but they may continue to serve out their previously approved committee roles. In the case that a Ph.D. committee chair leaves the University of Tennessee prior to a student completing the degree, the chair may (1) resign from the committee, (2) serve as a co-chair of the committee; or (3) serve as a member of the committee. The student must submit a change of committee form documenting the appointment of a new chair or co-chair and updating the appointment status of the previous chair.

In cases when a department head believes an exception to the above categories is needed, the department head may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School.

DRAFT